

Your essential guide to Contract & Fractional talent

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Unlocking agility and expertise with Contract and Fractional talent

Businesses today face a familiar yet pressing dual challenge: attracting top-tier talent while keeping pace with rapid change and transformation. Hiring a new full-time employee for every specialised need isn't always viable, it's costly, and can be slow if the right skill set is hard to find. That's where contract and fractional talent step in.

At Denholm, we can provide contract or fractional talent across all our key functions: Marketing, Sales, HR, Finance, Tech, Change & Transformation, Supply Chain, Operations & Engineering Both offer on-demand expertise, but they serve distinct purposes. Understanding the differences - and when to use each - can be a strategic advantage.



Aspect	Contract Talent	Fractional Talent
Scope	Task- or project-specific roles	Strategic or leadership-level roles
Engagement Duration	Short to medium term (weeks to months)	Ongoing part-time basis (e.g., 1–2 days/week)
Integration	Executes defined tasks or deliverables	Acts as a part of your leadership or strategic team
Level of Autonomy	Typically follows set direction	Provides strategic direction and leads initiatives
Examples	Web Developer for app build, Data Analyst for a report	Fractional CMO, CFO, Head of Product



Why consider Contract talent?

Contract professionals are ideal when you need specialist skill sets for a clearly defined, time-bound projects. They bring efficiency, focus, and hands-on delivery.

✓ Project-based expertise

Contractors bring the precise skills required—whether it's implementing a new CRM, designing a product interface, or auditing security protocols.

✓ Fast turnaround

With minimal ramp-up time, contract workers can quickly make an impact. This makes them perfect for deadlines and urgent initiatives where business as usual teams struggle.

✓ Cost efficiency

You avoid long-term employment costs. Pay only for what you need and with quicker and more impactful ROI.



Why choose Fractional talent?

Fractional leaders are a game-changer when your business needs ongoing strategic direction but not a full-time c-suite professional.

✓ Strategic impact without full-time cost

A fractional CFO or CMO can guide financial strategy or growth marketing while working a few days a week, or even a month—offering the leadership you need, at a fraction of the cost.

✓ Scalable leadership

Ideal for scaling businesses, startups, or companies in transition. Fractional execs help you scale intelligently and sustainably.

✓ Embedded wisdom

Unlike consultants, fractional professionals become embedded in your organisation—participating in leadership meetings, mentoring teams, and owning outcomes.

So, which is right for you?

Consider project scope. Clear, defined projects will suit contract talent. But if there are ongoing or strategic needs - fractional talent could be more suitable. Think about skills and integration. Need specialist skills but also long-term guidance?

Fractional talent would be the way forward. Budget is always a factor. Contract talent can be cost-effective for shorter projects while fractional talent can offer better value for longer engagements.

The choice depends on your specific needs. By understanding both options, you can build a more agile and successful team.

What are the difference types?

At Denholm, we guide clients through which engagement model best suits their business, and importantly, which method will help them attract the best interim talent. There are a range of options available depending on whether an assignment falls within IR35 or not.

LIMITED COMPANY CONTRACTORS

Limited Company Contractors set up their own limited company to provide their services to clients. Limited Contractors (often referred to PSC Personal Service Company) is the main engagement model with assignments outside IR35.

UMBRELLA COMPANY CONTRACTORS

Umbrella Company Contractors work through an umbrella company, which acts as an intermediary between you and the contractor. The umbrella company handles the contractor's invoicing, tax and national insurance contributions, and pays the contractor a salary. This saves you any hassles because the umbrella company handles all the payroll.

AGENCY WORKER (PAYE)

Agency Worker (PAYE) work through a recruitment agency, we act as an intermediary between you and the contractor. We can handle the contractor's invoicing, tax and national insurance contributions and pay the contractor a salary for exclusive partners.



Making IR35 simple, clear and compliant

IR35 doesn't need to be complicated. At Denholm Associates, we help both clients and contractors stay on the right side of the rules, without the stress. The final call on IR35 status sits with the client, but we work closely with everyone involved to keep things clear and compliant. We provide detailed info about roles, working setups, and contract terms to help with accurate decisions. If you've got questions, we're here with straight answers. When the rules shift, we help you stay on track with as little disruption as possible.

HOW WE STAY COMPLIANT

- Clear contracts that define tax responsibilities
- Accurate and careful IR35 assessments as standard – we partner with IR35 assessment specialist Kingsbridge Insurance, ensuring accurate compliant determination for clients and contractors. We also will insure against the determination to protect all parties should any costs arise from HMRC investigation
- Record-keeping of all IR35 decisions for legal compliance
- If a contractor is inside IR35 (and not using an umbrella), we handle PAYE payments directly
- We regularly report to HMRC under the Intermediary Reporting requirements

HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

- Expert IR35 advice, with up-to-date guidance for contractors and clients
- Support with status assessments - plus optional insurance for determination outcomes and potential HMRC investigations
- Help for contractors in understanding IR35, with referrals to trusted advisors
- Guidance on adjusting contracts when IR35 rules change, so transitions are smooth

We also recommend using FCSA-approved umbrella companies for inside IR35 contractors - and we only work with ones that meet this standard. The majority of our approved suppliers list of Umbrella Companies also comply with SafeRec, which provides real-time HMRC throughout the onboarding/compliance process and payslips.

OTHER SERVICES WE OFFER

We offer full contractor compliance and onboarding Contractor Payrolling – for client direct contractors Consolidated invoicing and ongoing contractor management.